Aotearoa Black Press #5

Contributions, critique, praise to :
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26/08/03

www.anarchistfaq.org
www.infoshop.org

Aotearoa Black Press was founded a couple of months ago. From the start, we have been publishing on the basis of autonomy and free distribution. We believe that the way we practice politics influences the kind of society we create.

We are kept alive by the wonderful comments and mail that keeps coming in from our readers. Thanks!
Without you, we would be nothing but cranky anarchists with no-one to vent to.

Sadly, we are facing the unpleasant reality of running a project on a communist basis in a capitalist world. ABP needs your help to keep going. Since we are autonomous, there is no parent organization sending us money. We have gone from printing 40 copies (issue #1) to 200 (issue #4). We are now distributed in Auckland, Wellington and Sydney (East Timor and Costa Rica coming soon!). Unfortunately, none of this is very cheap. If you enjoy reading the zine and you feel generous, you can lend us your support by donating printing paper (A4 laser or photocopier), envelopes/stamps (so we can mail copies out), printing services (free or below market rates) or money.

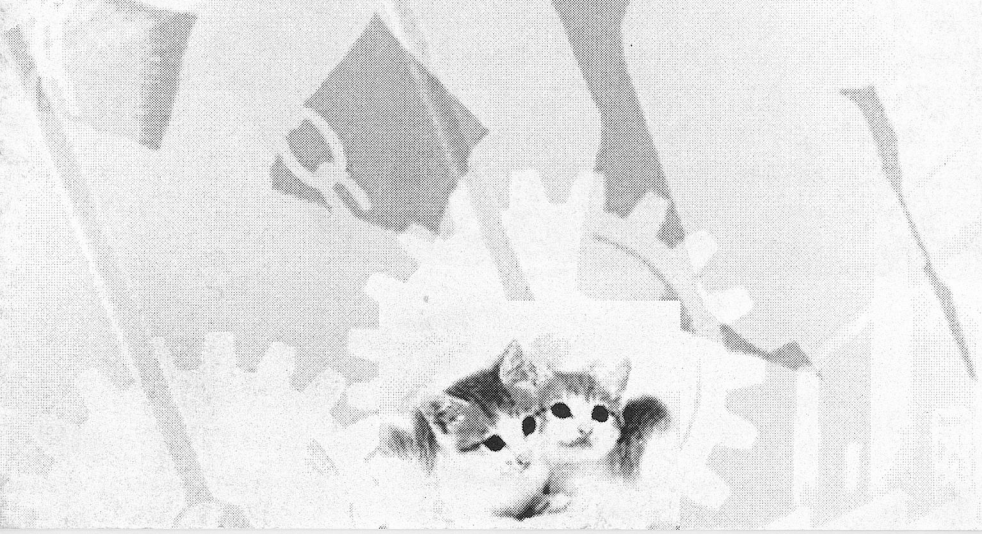
Each $7 goes to buy a ream of paper, enough for 70 copies.
Each $16 covers our transport costs for a single issue.
Each $20 will feed us while we slave over an issue.
Each $24 buys a toner cartridge, enough for hundreds of copies.
Each $50-$60 covers all costs for an entire issue.

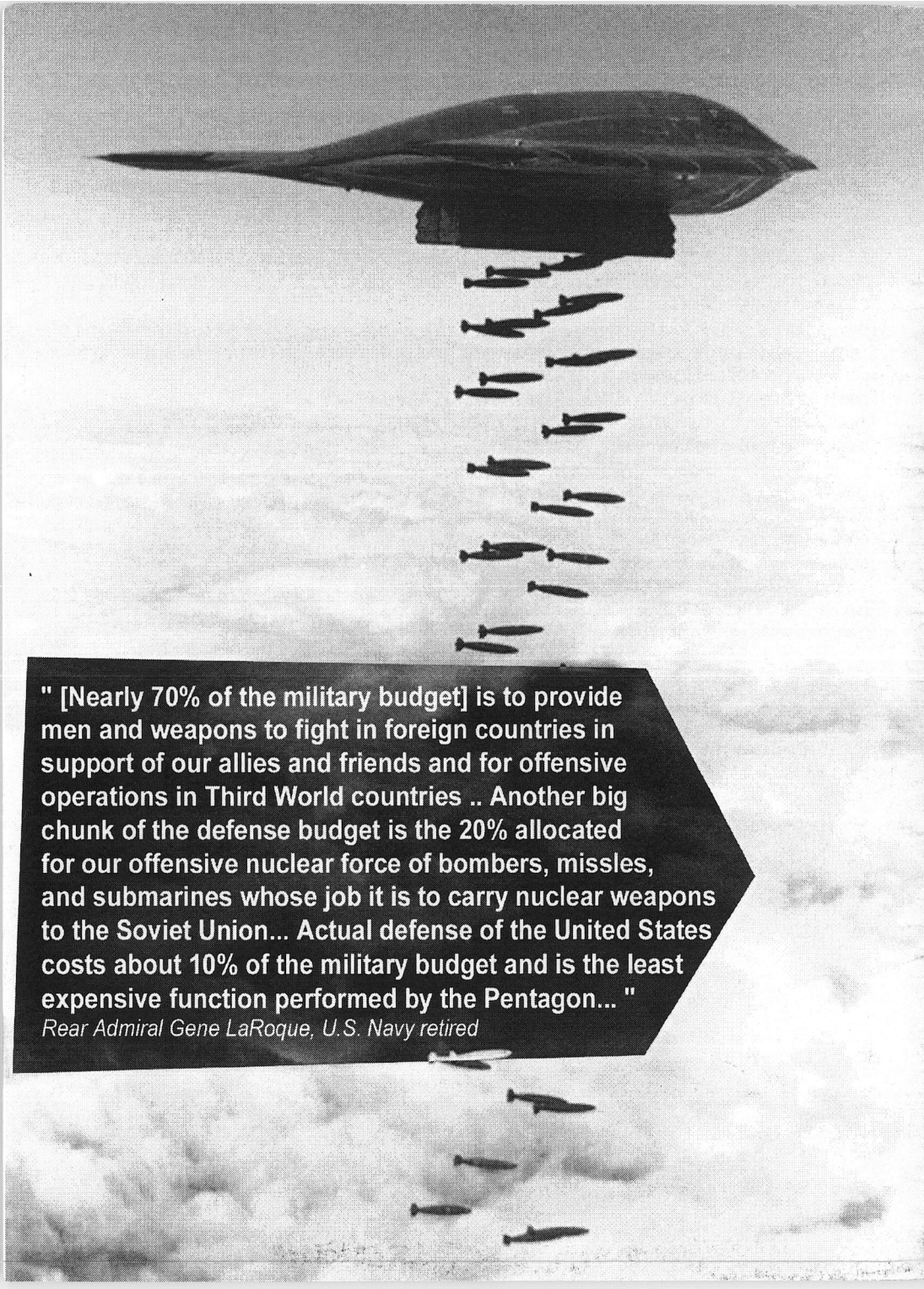
We would like to extend a HUGE thanks to everyone that has contributed. We've been given food, books, drinks/smokes, 5 reams of excellent paper and about $20 worth of cash.
By some rough reckoning, we're almost $200 in the red. We'd rather be in the black (ooh a pun).
We routinely give up eating to keep this project afloat. My ABP diet for today consisted of *cue drum roll* one damn banana. It's 7:30 pm and I'm seriously hungry.

So, please, please, please send us something. I can personally assure you God will kill a kitten for every dollar you don't send.

In the good news department: we are getting a physical address (real soon now) and are going to distribute thezine on a subscription basis. **The zine will remain free**, just send us a stamped self-addressed envelope for every issue. Or some money, any common currency, just so long as you send enough.

Contact **hipasfuhk@yahoo.co.nz** for more info or to make a donation (think of the kittens!!!)



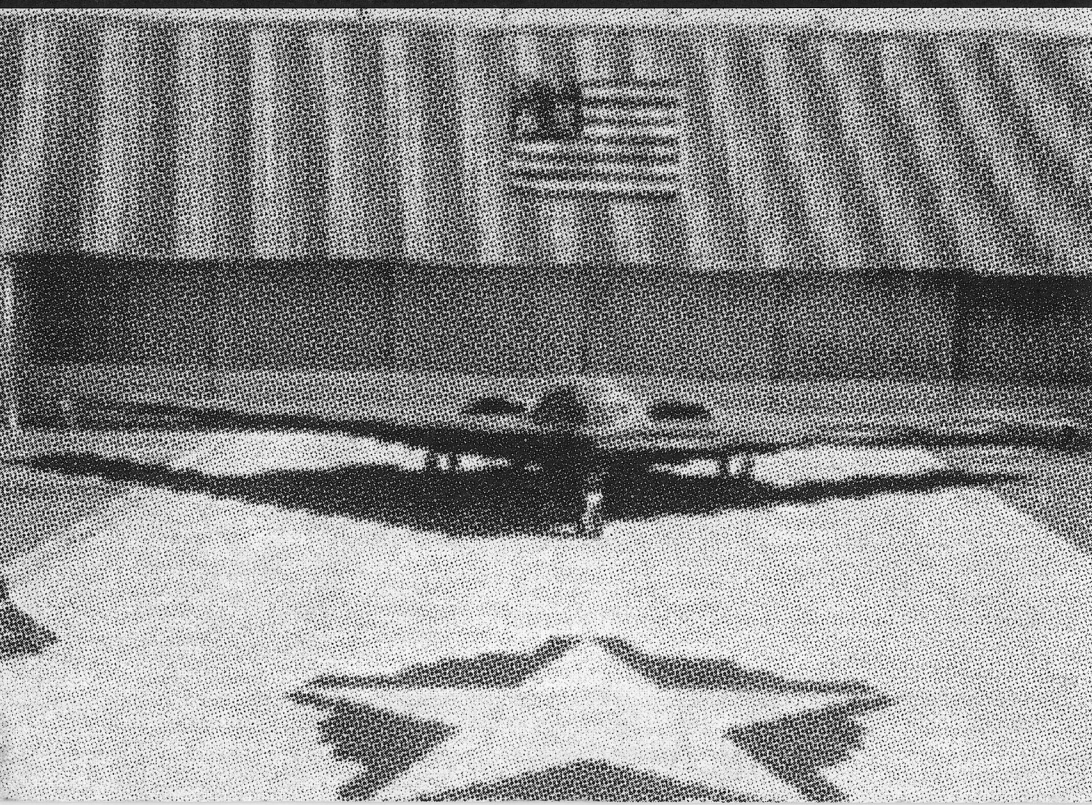


" [Nearly 70% of the military budget] is to provide men and weapons to fight in foreign countries in support of our allies and friends and for offensive operations in Third World countries .. Another big chunk of the defense budget is the 20% allocated for our offensive nuclear force of bombers, missles, and submarines whose job it is to carry nuclear weapons to the Soviet Union... Actual defense of the United States costs about 10% of the military budget and is the least expensive function performed by the Pentagon... "

Rear Admiral Gene LaRoque, U.S. Navy retired

"A terrorist is someone who has a bomb but doesn't have an air force."

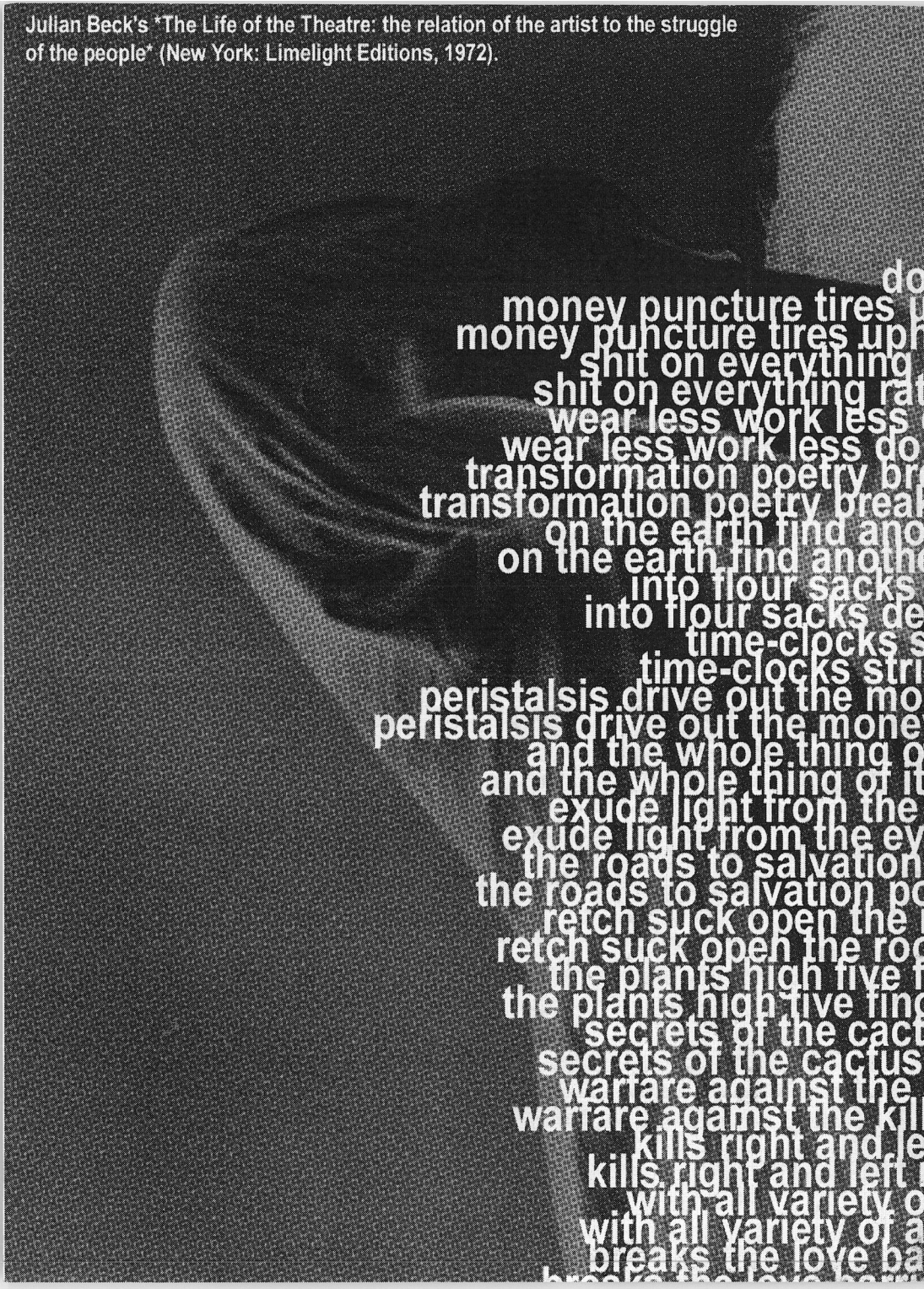
William Blum



"Our efforts to protect the wealth that belong
to the Iraqi people are paying off."
G. W. Bush
(Source: The White House)
BushSpeaks.com

Invest Wisely?

VICTORY
IS SO
SWEET


Julian Beck's *The Life of the Theatre: the relation of the artist to the struggle of the people* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1972).
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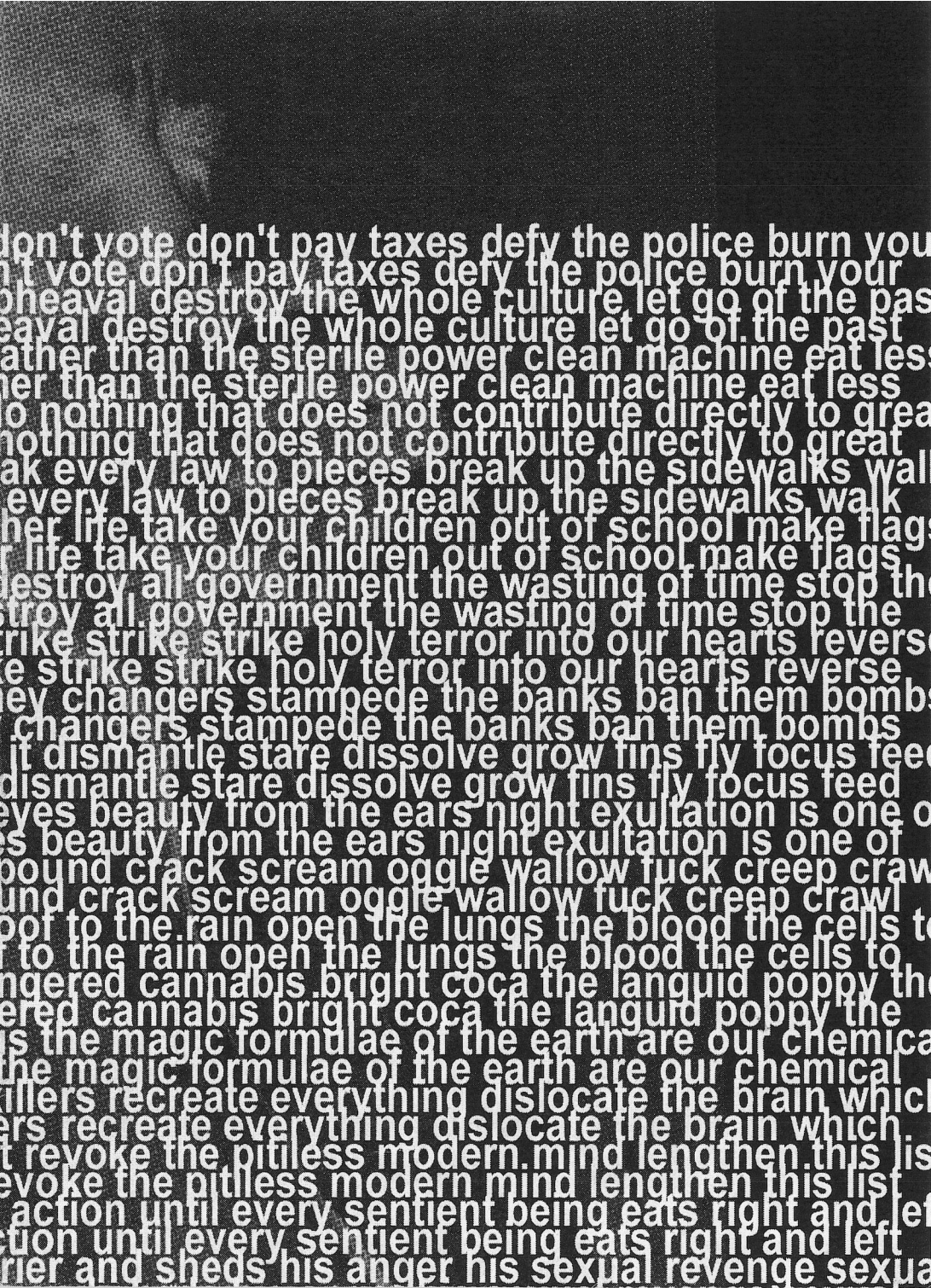
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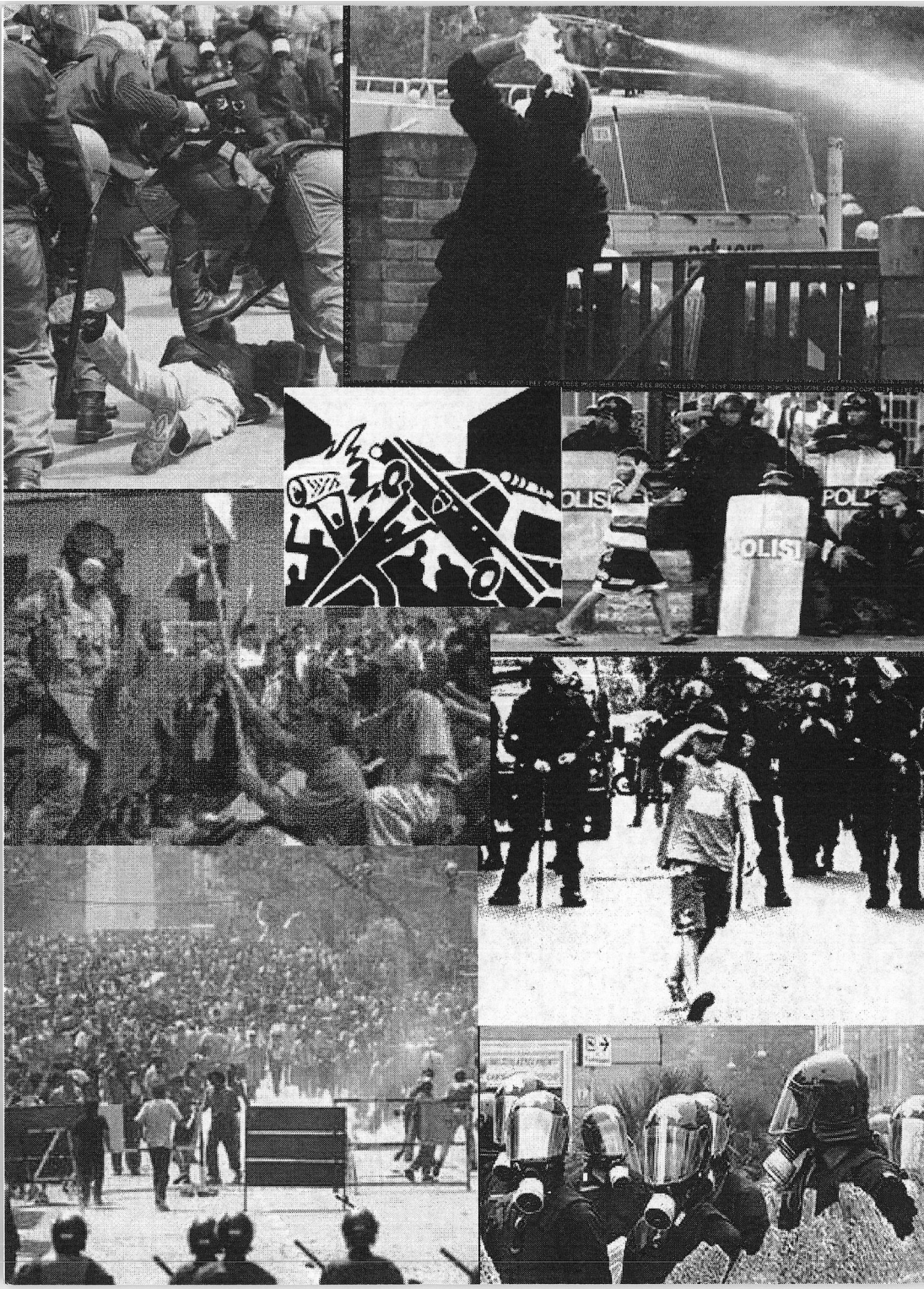
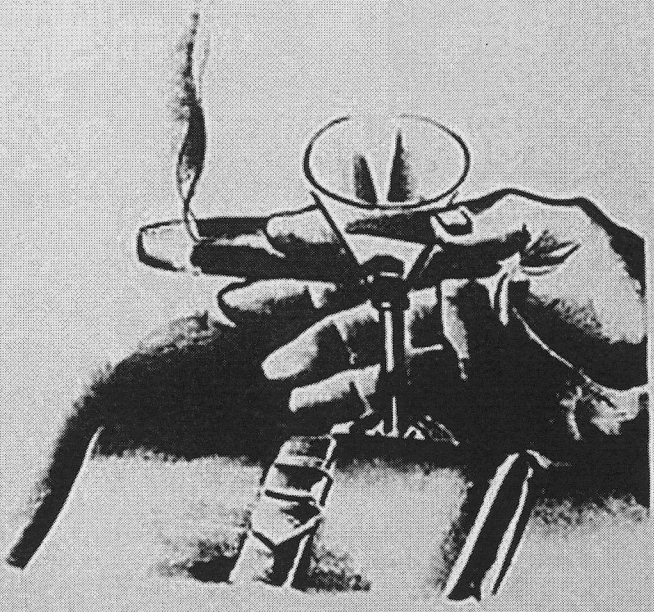




Anarchy: Myths And Reality

The term "anarchy" has been thrown around so liberally in the media that the average person will have many fears and prejudices about its nature. Let us try to enumerate some of the most common objections. As we shall see, most of these are based on misconceptions or deliberate misinformation.

"Anarchy" itself is a composite word that comes from Greek "an-" (without) and "archos" (ruler). It follows that "anarchy" describes a society where no one individual or group dominates another. It also follows that social institutions that codify and aid this domination – namely corporations, nation-states, and so forth – should be replaced with various professional and territorial groups constituted on the basis of free agreement. In essence, the difference between an anarchist and any other person is that both might believe the maxim "power corrupts", but the anarchist will take it to the extent of saying: "if power corrupts, then let no-one have power". This brings us to the first objection.

Objection #1: *"Without laws, without police, society would degenerate into wanton violence and destruction. What is there to stop someone from doing whatever they want in the absence of authority?"*

This is a common objection, and a reasonable question. This objection hinges on the idea of government as a sole maintainer of order in a ruthless and chaotic natural world. The trouble is, this objection is without any real validity.

Modern police has only been introduced during the Industrial Revolution – in London, in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel (the British police are still called "Bobbies" after him). No society before 1829 or after that tolerated wanton murder, rape, theft or other criminality – the society would naturally organize to deal with its troublemakers. The problem with existing police forces is their hierarchical, authoritarian organization which lends itself to control by a small group – usually a government official. Since the interests of the government and those of the people diverge so frequently and on so many issues, the police become an instrument of oppression rather than an instrument of protection. A better model might be that of citizen-monitored, recallable police officers that are responsible for maintaining order in a specific community with accord to the rules of that community.

The current legal system (as well as all legal codes in the world) are derived from ancient Mesopotamia – Hammurabi's Code Of Laws. This code of laws claims to be divinely inspired - Hammurabi was sent by the god Marduk to rule over men, and the idea of "divine right" to rule and make law has been with us ever since. In practice, Hammurabi's code was used to secure privilege from the start. Punishment for theft from privileged classes was death, theft from a common citizen meant restitution. In practice, those with privilege make laws to suit themselves at the expense of everyone else. From that time to our day, laws have created a duality between what is accepted as right and what is written in the law books. This duality is exploited by the legislators for their own benefit, often against popular opposition.

Objection #2: *"All animals naturally compete for their survival. Humans are nothing more than animals, so government is necessary for a society to function properly."*

This is really a variant of the first objection. Sadly, many people have a skewed view of natural selection, that the natural world is a fierce conflict of every individual against every other individual. This is simply not true. The most successful species are pretty much exclusively social animals – there are countless varieties of birds, animals, fish and even insects that live in large groups. Human beings are no exception, humans are very highly socialized and given the choice would rather cooperate than compete. Charles Darwin had in fact written that it is cooperation within a species that makes the species successful. Where competition occurs, it is only as a result of shortage and tends to destroy the advantages gained by cooperation.

Human societies have existed for a very long time – at least thousands of years before the first code of laws – and yet murder, theft and other antisocial activity is universally despised whether these societies had a government or not. It is not necessary for an authority to tell a society how to function – the ideas of right and wrong, what could be called "morality", have always been a very necessary part of our evolution. It is in fact authority that turns these ideas on their head: when antagonistic classes are created in a society, the ensuing conflict between these classes leads to the decline and fall of the society. Ironically, the first civilization to fall under these pressures was ancient Sumeria – the birthplace of the first code of laws.

Objection #3: *"Anarchy means chaos and disorganization. A society founded on these principles could not function, or at any rate, not for very long."*

First of all, "anarchy" is not a synonym for "chaos", even if it is used as such by news anchors. Anarchy is simply the absence of authority. There are many everyday situations where organization happens without authority: some friends getting together for a coffee or planning a camping trip. The idea of multiple parties putting forward their ideas and working on a mutually acceptable solution is not new or limited to a small scale: it can be found in international railway and postal arrangements, the global telephone network and the Internet.

What anarchists do wish to accomplish is to do away with impersonal, authoritarian institutions of mass industrial society and replace them with human-scale organizations based on free agreement of all involved.

Objection #4: *"All this is very well, but these ideas are utopian. If anarchy was a superior mode of existence, it would have triumphed."*

This argument ignores the fact that societies are continuously changing and evolving. It is similar to someone living in Egypt 4000 years ago saying: "Democracy? Hah! Then who would organize all of the slaves? Surely if democracy was so good, it would have come about naturally."

Even though anarchism as a set of principles is relatively new, anarchistic ideas have existed for thousands of years at the very least. Anti-authoritarian ideas are present in the *Tao Te Ching* (a major work in Chinese philosophy of approximately 600 B.C.) and the New Testament of the *Bible*. Revolts against authority are as old as the history of authority itself. No state or empire, no matter how powerful, has been able to sustain itself indefinitely. If these general trends are true, we will continue to see the fall and rise of new states until such time comes that authority is no more.

Objection #5: *"Anarchy may be possible in a simple, primitive society, but not today. A return to anarchy would mean having to give up the benefits we have reaped from civilization."*

History contradicts this assertion. The best example of anarchist ideas put in practice on a large scale in a modern society was during the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War. The anarchist political and labour organizations within the Popular Front were the main opposition to the fascist-led coup. A brief list of their achievements includes: forming anti-fascist militias, organizing the industry as well as creating schools, social centres and health clinics. Agriculture, industry and the military were all run on libertarian principles: everyone in administrative positions was elected by a general vote and was subject to instant recall.

Objection #6: *"If the Spanish Civil War showed us a vision of an anarchist society, then why is it no longer around? Surely a society needs to be able to defend itself in order to survive."*

The quality of society does not directly relate to its military strength – the US is an excellent case in point. More specifically, the Spanish Civil War was complicated by a number of different factors. First, the fascists had the support of the former armed forces, so they were advantaged in terms of trained soldiers and materiel. Second, the fascists received significant military support: 50,000 Italian troops and a squadron of Hitler's Luftwaffe. Third, the only anti-fascist faction that received any foreign backing was the Communist Party. Aside from romantic individuals like Ernest Hemingway and George Orwell who traveled to Spain to join the International Brigades, no foreign aid was forthcoming. Finally, the Communist Party became little more than the extension of Stalin's imperial ambitions: the OGPU (Soviet secret police) set up gulag-style prison camps, hoarded weapons away from the front in order to deal with other factions in the Popular Front and eventually outlawed and rounded up non-Communist activists. The resultant infighting in the Popular Front ranks destroyed the resistance just as effectively (if not more so) than the fascist coup itself.

If you are interested in the subject, George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* is a very readable account of the events of the Spanish Civil War. George Orwell served with the socialist POUM militia, which was the first to be outlawed and officially suppressed, but his account of the anarchist efforts are both sympathetic and validated by historical evidence.

Conclusion

Anarchism is not an ideology, rather it is a fundamental means of thinking, acting and relating to people. It can be expressed most simply as: "You are free to do as you will, so long as everyone else has the same freedom." As a trend within society, its history is one of continuous evolution and development, so it evades a formulaic definition as a self-contained social theory.

It is, of course, impossible to list and comprehensively answer every misconception and accusation made about anarchist thought and its historic practice. All it takes is a measure of imagination - just ask yourself: "How would this or that objective be achieved in a society with no authority?" The Internet is always a valuable source of information.

A Brief Reading List

A very comprehensive and detailed work dealing with anarchist thought is gathered at **www.anarchistfaq.org**

George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* can be found at **http://orwell.ru/library/novels/Homage_to_Catalonia/**

A massive archive of classical anarchist texts is available at **http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/** My favourites are writings by the famous natural scientist Peter Kropotkin, in particular his essays entitled *Modern Science and Anarchism* and *Anarchist Morality* and books such as *Mutual Aid* and *Conquest of Bread*.

Of contemporary anarchist thinkers, the most important is undoubtedly Noam Chomsky, author of more than 30 books and professor of linguistics at the Massachusets Institute of Technology. *Deterring Democracy* and *Manufacturing Consent* are his best-known works, though they do not deal specifically with anarchism. Both are a worthwhile read and are available in many libraries and bookstores.

"If we do not do the impossible, we shall be faced with the unthinkable."

Murray Bookchin, In The Ecology of Freedom
(Palo Alto: Cheshire Books,1982)

Anti –vivisection Protestors blockade rail tracks to delay vivisectors sight seeing trip to West Coast

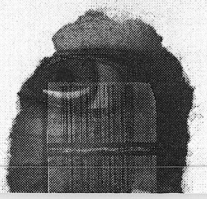
"To be GOVERNED is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so.

To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished.

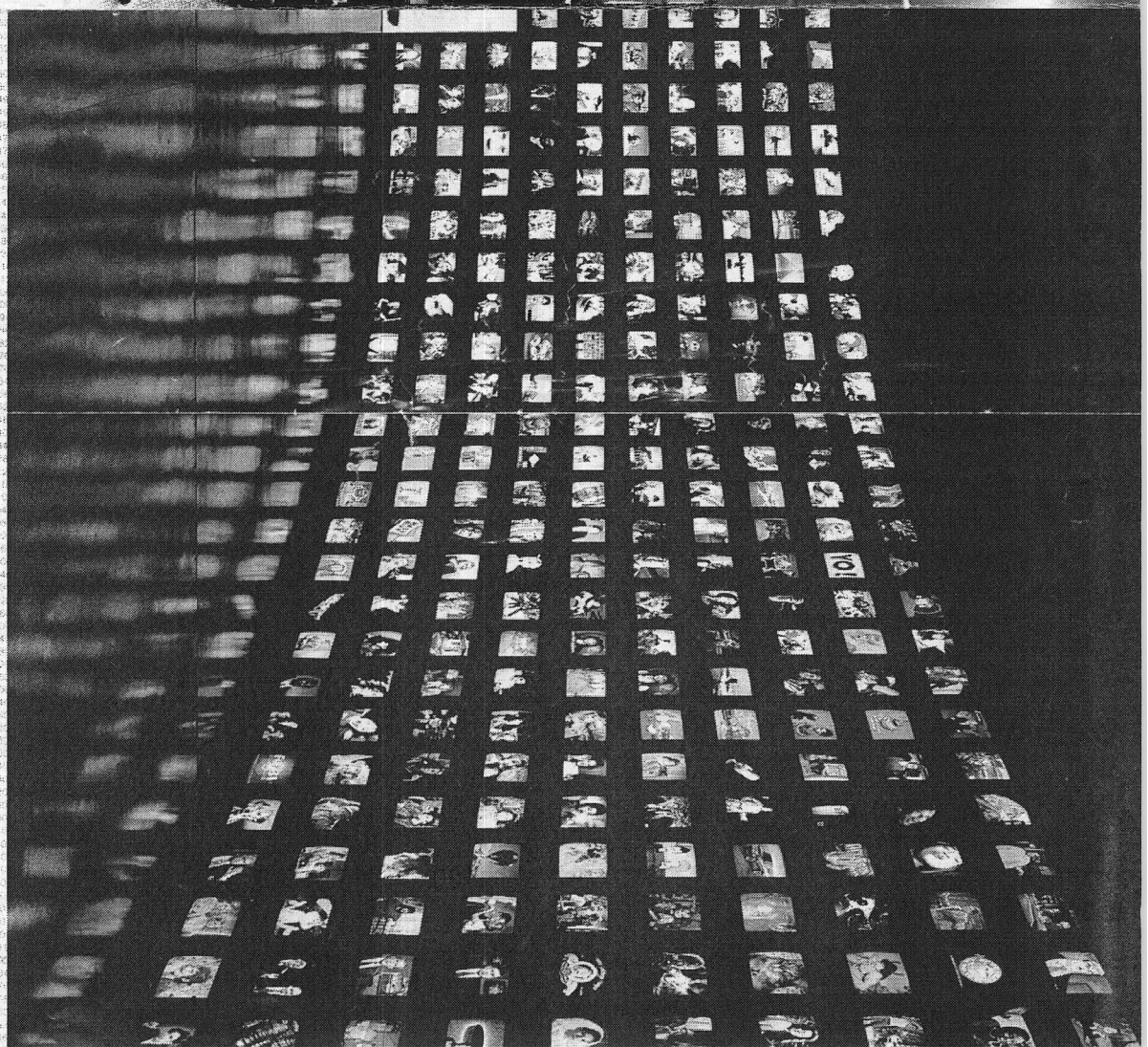
It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harrassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed, and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonored.

That is government, that is its justice, that is its morality."

P. J. Proudhon,
General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century



QVC

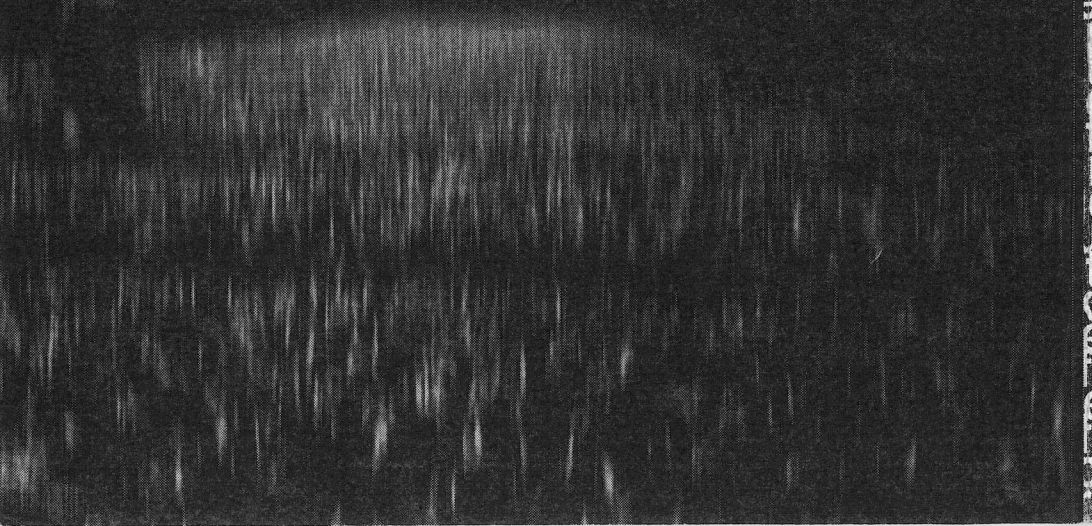


The moratorium on Genetic Engineering is over on October 29th ...

New Zealand's government is about to go against the will of the vast majority of the population in order to satisfy its misguided eagerness to accommodate the multinationals. The same multinationals that have for many years been "accidentally" contaminating traditional crops and patenting the genes of indigenous flora and fauna around the world.

In Mexico, the poor monitoring of imported corn seed stock has led to irreversible problems for farmers, who have been growing native varieties for generations. Canadian and US seed imported under NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) rules introduced in 1997 saw a massive influx of "transgenicos" (GE organisms) into Mexico. This caused widespread contamination of 50 distinct families and thousands of varieties of corn by the transnational biotech cartel consisting of Monstanto, DuPont and Novartis. The introduced terminator gene which stops self-sustaining seed production means Mexican farmers face the prospect of paying Monsanto, DuPont, and Novartis to plant varieties cultivated for thousands of years.

The case in Mexico is not dissimilar to the events of 2001 in New Zealand when Novartis claimed inadvertent contamination of corn, the extent of which has been consistently downplayed by the government. Earlier this month (August 7th 2003) more unwittingly planted contaminated corn was harvested from fields around Gisborne and Pukekohe that had no protection to stop any pollen from drifting with the breeze. That harvest was consumed by both people and animals.



The Environment Risk Management Authority (ERMA) itself has admitted that GE tamarillos that were grown in northland could not be properly contained.

In light of this we are still expected to trust the government and their corporate partners not to "accidentally" contaminate our food supply and then force us to pay for the privilege of eating GE organisms surreptitiously added into the food chain.

Most Maori people in New Zealand are opposed to the introduction of GE here for a range of reasons. One of these reasons is the possibility that cross-pollination could create transgenic hybrids of native flora and fauna. These hybrids may displace or eliminate indigenous species with which Maori have a particular *whakapapa* (spiritual and genealogical relationship). All living things are fundamentally interconnected in Maori belief systems, so this sort of experimentation is seriously disrespectful.How much damage will native biodiversity sustain before being over-run by un-natural competitors. ERMA fails to understand, or ignores the nature of Maori cultural objection to GE.

The Australian government has recently approved commercial planting of GE rapeseed (canola) variety which has caused weight loss and organ enlargement to rats Monsanto's own tests. Australian Federal Agriculture Minister Warren Truss says: "The Federal Government firmly believes that, once a science-based decision has been made by the Gene Technology Regulator, all commercial decision-making should be left to the industry."

China, the EU, Japan and South Korea have all had mandatory labeling implemented as of March 2002. China has made it mandatory that all food containing GE must be certified by the Ministry of Agriculture to be harmless to humans, animals, and the environment. China is also about to introduce a drive to be the biggest growers of non GE soy in the world. A pro-GE choice by any government flies in the face of these directives and against a vast majority of the world's populace.

New Zealand's government wants to help big business without guarantees of GE safety.
People need to show their opposition with stronger resistance and direct action against the corporations trying to force their (dangerous) use of this technology upon us.
It is only a matter of time before we have *no* choice about whether or not we eat GE, and who we pay for this lack of choice.

It is important to remember that limiting the number of plant varieties of any fruit or vegetable that are consumed in large quantities could lead to opportunistic disease or infection later on. The devastating potato famine in Ireland (1846-1850) was a result of heavy reliance on one type of food (which was blighted), as many people today rely heavily on rice and other grains.

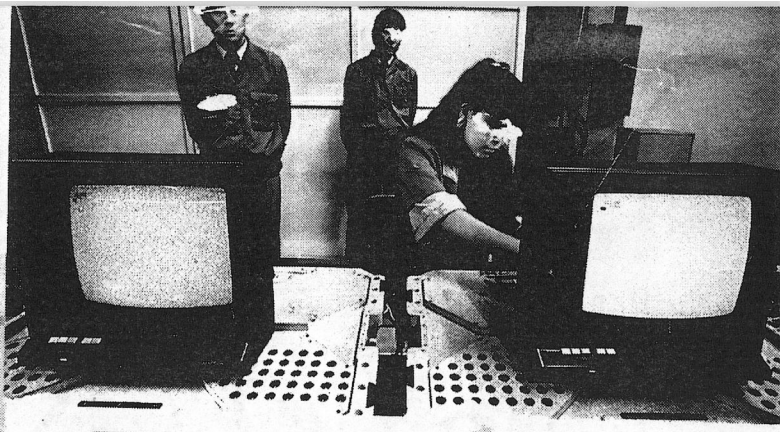
Pesticide resistant GE crops are also perpetuating the resistance to pesticides of some pests. This only means that more chemical sprays are used, desroying bacteria that keep the soil healthy by maintaining nitrogen levels necessary for plants.

Some GE-Free advocates say that protests could get too militant. Consequently, they do not want to do any more than lobby the government. It is time for everyone to either sit back and take it, or to get organised and get militant!

More info:

www.radio4all.org/aia/act_gehit.html

www.infoshop.org/biotechwatch.html

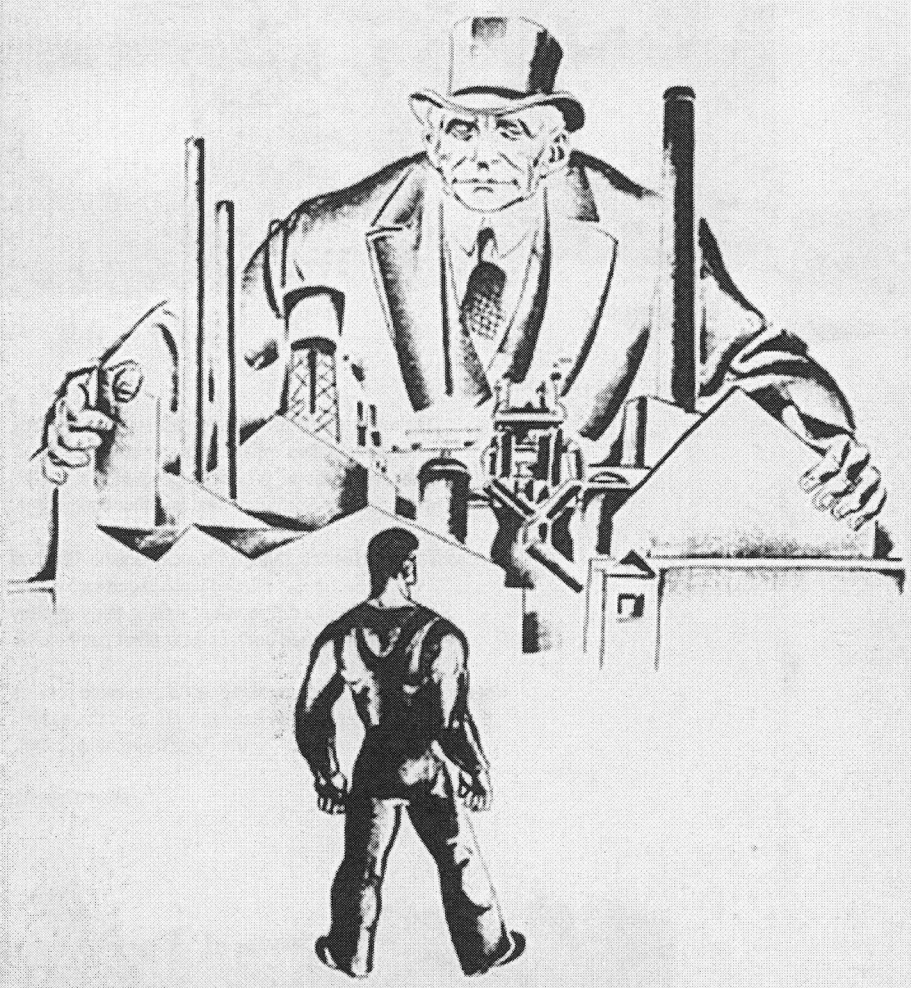


"The major media are large corporations, owned by and interlinked with even larger conglomerates. Like other corporations, they sell a product to a market. The market is advertisers - that is, other businesses.

The product is audiences, [and] for the elite media, [they're] relatively privileged audiences. So we have major corporations selling fairly wealthy and privileged audiences to other businesses.

Not surprisingly, the picture of the world presented reflects the narrow and biased interests and values of the sellers, the buyers and the product."

Noam Chomsky

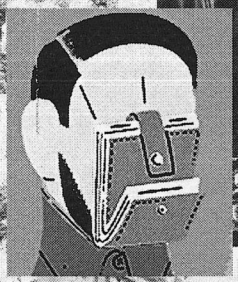


"We stand for the maintenance of private property... We shall protect free enterprise as the most expedient, or rather the sole possible economic order."

Adolf Hitler

his office, he walks
the neighborhood

UN SQUATT D'EXPULSÉ, DIX DE REOCCUPÉS!



free world-wide